

# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

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State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development

## Regional Unemployment Rates Decline in August

### At a glance...

Unemployment rates in eight of the ten counties of Northwest Wisconsin declined in August. The Douglas County rate was unchanged and unemployment increased in Burnett County. The labor force estimates, released by the Department of Workforce Development, reflect typical employment and unemployment patterns for the middle of August. Half of the seventy-two counties in Wisconsin had an unemployment rate in August that was below 3.8 percent but that included only three counties from the Northwest region: Bayfield, Sawyer, and Taylor.

The number of residents employed in the northwest counties generally declines in August. This year the number of employed dropped from 91,040 in July to 90,240 in August. The reduction of 550 jobholders in the ten-county northwest region was less than the average decline over the past five years.

Much of the reduction in employment is attributed to summer jobholders leaving the labor force. Because they left the labor force, there was no increase in the number of unemployed in the region. Burnett is also the only county in the region, and one of only eight in the state, that reported an increase in unemployment rate in August. Conversely, only 14 counties in the state reported unemployment rates lower this month than a year ago, but five of those counties were in the northwest: Iron, Rusk, Sawyer, Ashland, and Bayfield (the largest decline in rate in the state).

The greatest decline in jobs occurred in retail trade and manufacturing. The loss of retail trade jobs corresponds with students leaving to return to school and occurred primarily in the area's tourism counties. The loss of manufacturing jobs follows state and national trends. Rusk and Taylor counties reported the heaviest loss of production jobs, although Price, Ashland, and Douglas counties have also lost manufacturing jobs this year.

### A closer look...

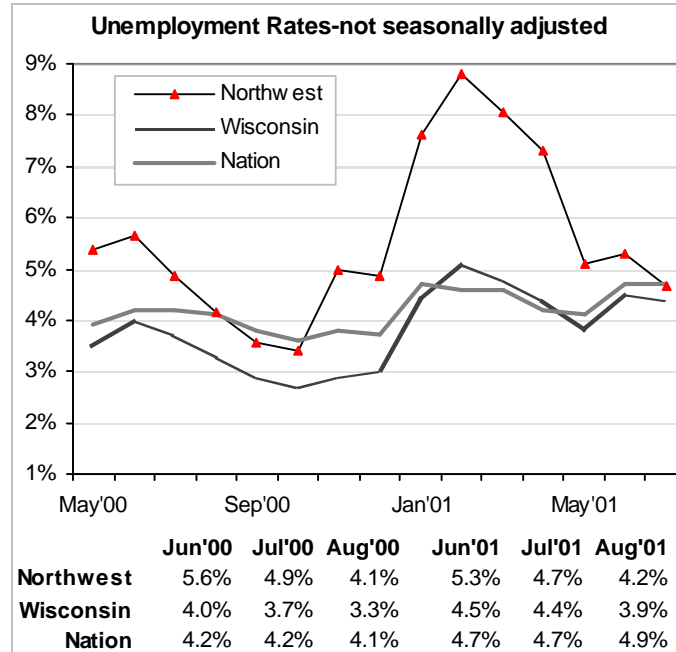
What happens in August, the height of summer, that causes employment to decline? Generally, students begin to prepare to return to school, especially college students. Jobs with recreation departments, camps, and summer education end in August. And, finally, families take summer vacations and teenagers quit jobs to join them.

Because these summer jobholders leave the labor market when they leave jobs, there is no increase in the number of unemployed in the local labor force. In fact, unemployment declined in August as jobseekers moved in to fill some of the jobs vacated by students. Burnett County, however, reported a small increase in the number of unemployed (25), but that was enough to raise the unemployment rate 0.4 of a percentage point.

The number of residents filing claims for unemployment benefits has been declining since February when the number of claims peaked at 5,491. In mid-August there were 1,750 claims filed by local residents for unemployment benefits, the highest in August since the early 1990s. The number of claims is declining, however, and this trend does continue into September indicating that unemployment rates will drop further next month.

Most of the residents filing claims for unemployment benefits have been laid off from area manufacturers. This is true not only in Northwest Wisconsin, but also statewide. Counties with a greater ratio of production workers have increasing unemployment rates.

Manufacturing employment in the northwest declined by 130 jobs in August and is down over 300 jobs since last August. Price County, which has 200 fewer manufacturing jobs than a year ago and nearly 600 fewer than two years ago, reported a small increase in jobs in August as ads appeared in local papers seeking production workers. Rusk and Taylor counties, also with high ratios of production jobs, reported a loss of manufacturing employment in August. This seems to be a continuation of



short-term lay offs that have marked lumber and wood employers all year.

Employers from other industries continued to hire workers in August, as they have for most of the year. Much of the increase this month is due to school workers returning after summer break. Janitors, school bus drivers, and kitchen workers prepared for the resumption of classes.

The increase of 240 jobs in the region in August produced an increase of over 600 more jobs since last August.

Most of those jobs are with retail trade and service industry employers. During the summer months, retail trade and service jobs comprise 43 percent of the total jobs in the region compared with a 39 percent share in late winter-early spring.

<b>August Data</b>	Wisconsin	Ashland	Bayfield	Burnett	Douglas	Iron	Price	Rusk	Sawyer	Taylor	Washburn
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	3,079,100	8,100	7,600	7,600	23,200	3,400	6,900	7,500	9,800	11,300	8,700
Employed	2,957,900	7,700	7,300	7,200	22,300	3,200	6,600	7,100	9,500	11,000	8,300
Unemployed	121,300	400	300	300	900	100	400	400	300	300	400
Unemployment rate(%)	3.9%	5.5%	3.5%	4.3%	3.9%	4.4%	5.5%	5.3%	3.4%	3.0%	4.2%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	2,850,770	8,700	4,240	4,890	17,990	2,450	6,360	6,130	6,880	9,360	6,590
Construction & Mining	140,280	420	280	330	1,190	400	330	290	360	530	310
Manufacturing	595,950	1,650	260	1,030	1,260	480	2,200	2,490	780	3,520	1,270
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	134,440	160	270	140	2,380	50	130	250	140	450	240
Wholesale Trade	139,840	190	60	50	1,150	80	230	120	130	450	130
Retail Trade	506,840	1,820	940	1,070	3,710	610	1,050	820	1,930	1,570	1,580
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	153,750	280	160	140	490	30	210	130	310	360	230
Services	799,610	2,470	1,000	780	5,440	420	1,230	740	1,680	1,480	1,590
Government	380,050	1,710	1,280	1,370	2,370	390	990	1,280	1,550	1,010	1,240

#### Change from previous month

<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	-48,400	-300	-200	-100	-200	0	-100	0	-300	-100	-100
Employed	-31,600	-100	-200	-200	-200	0	0	0	-200	0	-100
Unemployed	-16,700	-200	0	0	0	-100	0	0	-100	-100	0
Unemployment rate(%)	-0.5%	-2.1%	-0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	-1.0%	-0.7%	-0.3%	-0.5%	-0.9%	-0.6%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	-3,150	-20	-40	-40	140	30	70	80	-50	80	0
Construction & Mining	-630	-10	-10	0	30	0	0	0	10	10	0
Manufacturing	-1,760	-10	10	-10	-20	0	20	-30	-10	-30	-60
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	630	0	-10	0	30	0	0	10	-10	0	0
Wholesale Trade	460	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-10	-10	0
Retail Trade	2,630	-10	-10	0	-30	10	10	10	-40	40	-30
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	-390	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Services	430	50	0	-10	110	0	30	10	0	20	70
Government	-4,520	-30	-20	-20	10	20	20	80	0	50	20

#### Change from one year ago

<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	97,600	200	200	300	200	200	200	400	-200	600	400
Employed	76,100	300	200	100	200	100	200	400	-100	600	300
Unemployed	21,600	-100	0	100	0	-100	100	0	-100	0	100
Unemployment rate(%)	0.6%	-0.9%	-1.0%	1.7%	-0.1%	-0.3%	1.1%	-0.4%	-0.6%	0.5%	0.2%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	-6,530	40	150	-50	370	60	-60	130	-170	40	130
Construction & Mining	-910	-80	0	30	50	20	60	20	0	-40	20
Manufacturing	-29,300	-10	20	-50	-70	10	-200	20	-60	-40	50
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	1,590	-40	0	-10	220	-10	0	0	0	10	-10
Wholesale Trade	-1,520	0	-10	-10	60	10	20	0	-10	0	0
Retail Trade	2,140	30	30	50	-20	20	10	20	20	20	10
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	3,620	10	10	40	-10	0	10	0	10	10	0
Services	15,340	130	-10	-120	390	-10	30	-100	90	80	50
Government	2,510	-20	120	30	-250	30	10	160	-240	0	10

\* Includes participants residing in area. \*\* Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: [WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI](http://WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI)

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